BiNet News FREE

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GLTTB Movement in Argentina:

A Few Lonely Warriors Dancing in the Streets

by Alejandra Sarda

The first political gay group was founded in Buenos Aires in 1969. It was called Nuestro Mundo (Our World) and it was composed of middle class left wing intellectuals, all of them male. Those were years of fervent politicization and intellectual debates in Argentina, even though the country was under military regime. In 1971, that group was joined by others in the Frente de Liberacion Homosexual (FLH, or Homosexual Liberation Front). The Front was active between 1971 and 1976, and it was composed of several groups: Catholics, leftist students, anarchists, lesbians (Safo was the name of their group, the first of its kind in the country), professionals, etc. They wrote an amazing theoretical work, advocating a radical freedom of the homosexual part in each individual, embracing feminist concepts of patriarchy, male supremacy and the construct of gender roles, and claiming effeminate gay males and butch lesbians as the embodiment of gender deconstruction and sexual revolution. They were also very visible activists, marching in political demonstrations with their banners, disrupting scholarly conferences where experts were demonizing homosexuality and joining other progressive groups for debates in a public park.

In 1976 the cruelest military dictatorship Argentina ever endured began. The Front was disbanded and most of its activists fled into exile. From 1976 to 1984 there was no possibility at all for queer organizing or for social organizing of any kind. The country was fiercely ruled by the military, who "disappeared" 30,000 citizens, forced thousands into exile, ruined the economy and killed hundreds of young boys during the Malvinas war. Lesbians and gays met in private homes, quietly, and prayed not to be discovered. Transgender people were arrested, tortured and killed, as they still are. I have no idea what bisexuals were doing then; they have not come out to tell their stories yet.

In 1984, Argentina came back to life. A huge wave of hope swept the country: we all thought Democracy would bring all solutions and soothe all wounds. We were wrong, however. In response to a particularly violent police raid at a gay bar, the Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA, or Argentinean Homosexual Community) was funded by several gay men and a handful of lesbians. They had a very political agenda, focusing on denouncing discrimination against gays and lesbians, and teaching mainstream society that queers have human rights, too, and that they should be defended. From the very beginning they tried to look neat: men appeared on TV in suits and ties; women were more difficult to tame (they were quite butch to put on a dress), but the picture was always of very serious people discussing progressive human rights matters with dignity. Almost every male current activist who is older than 30 has been a CHA member once. In spite of all its shortcomings, the organization did pioneering work and that is valuable

From 1987 on, lesbians started coming out publicly and creating their own groups. As in other countries, most lesbian groups in Argentina have feminist roots. In some cases, it means strong prejudices against transgender people and bisexuals; in others it does not.

Between 1990 and 1995, there were different factions at work in the Argentinean queer political movement. Former CHA members created Gays por los Derechos Civiles (Gays for Civil Rights), a very dynamic group that contributed immensely to bringing people to the movement and to gaining acceptance for queers in the wider society through superb media work, creative demonstrations and the initiative to celebrate Pride Day with an annual parade beginning in 1992. They were soon joined

(Continued on page 4)

BiNet News

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is to collect and distribute information regarding Bisexuality, to facilitate the development of Bisexual community and visibility; to work for the equal rights and liberation of Bisexuals and all oppressed peoples; and to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the Bisexual community. We are committed to being affirmatively inclusive of a multicultural constituency and political agenda.

Membership is open to everyone who agrees with our purpose and pays annual dues (or if unable to pay, requests a waiver.) Individuals are asked to contribute $1 per $1,000 of yearly income. Groups are asked to contribute $25-100.

BiNet News is a publication of BiNet USA. It is sent to individuals and groups who have become members of BiNet USA, to Bi and LesBiGay groups in areas with few networking resources, and to groups with whom we are building relations via newsletter exchanges, etc.

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RANTING FROM THE EDITRIX

Well here we are finally. I want to start off by apologizing for missing an issue and having the next one late as well.

Unfortunately back in May I was diagnosed with cancer. Between treatments, work and trying to help with the planning of the Annual Meeting, well something had to go and that something ended up being the Spring edition of the BiNet News. In July I left work, and continued dealing with a gamut of health and personal issues. Finally in mid-August realizing that I really didn't have the strength to continue, I finally resigned as a National Coordinator for BiNet USA. I also relinquished all my responsibilities as well , including the BiNet News.

Gerard Palmieri from San Francisco has agreed to step up as the next Editor, and he'll be introducing himself in the next issue. For some strange reason I decided to do one last issue, and that's what you hold in your hands.

It's not the best issue I've ever done, but like all the previous issues it is a work of love.

I want to thank all the wonderful people who I have had an opportunity to work with over the last 4 years of doing the BiNet News. Some of you I have had the honor of meeting, but there are so many of you that have been just a voice



on the phone or who I have corresponded with over time over that place called the Information Hwy.

I want to personally thank my staff over the years. Wendy Naumann who also stepped down as the Regional News Editor. I thank you for coming and being willing to do one of the more thankless and time consuming jobs on the BiNet News ... chasing down and wrestling to get information from the various regions ... you are a saint!

To Eve Diana, who called to complain about the incessant typos and grammar errors ... who would have know by the end of our conversation that I would have talked you into becoming our proof reader ... I hope one day you'll forgive me for all the last minute work I sent off to you <grin>.

To Gerard Palmieri, who has been dealing with the distribution for the *BiNet News* for the last year and half or so. Gerard is one of those people who you can call up and just do a brain dump on ... a most wonderful man! Gerard, I'm turning my baby over to you. It's with much sadness and joy that I do so. Knowing you as well as I do, I can think of no one finer to pass the baton on to. All I ask is that when those deadlines hit, and you're sitting hunched over the computer trying to figure out how to make it work ... that you think of me kindly.

To all of you who have contributed your stories, poems and articles. I thank you. It has really been your contributions that have made the *BiNet News* what it is. It's not just a publication for activists, but one that is of interests to a majority of bisexuals. Remember it is your voice that guides this organization and this publication. The National Coordinators and Regional Organizers need to have your direction in order for both of these things to continue growing and maturing.

I would also add that right now we're short one National Coordinator. BiNet USA is an organization made up from a diverse background of folks. But of late it seems that bi men have been in short supply.

How often have we heard: "Where are the Bi male leaders?"

Surely someone out there has the time and the energy to continue the dream. If you are unsatisfied with BiNet USA, then now is the time to step forward and to help create a better organization. Don't be one of those who just sits back and complains ... take that challenge and make a difference!

For those of you who would like to stay in touch I can be reached at:

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Take care and my love to you all.

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(Continued from page 1)

by the first transgender activists, but very few lesbians were active in this sector. Lesbians were mostly working with other women, through support and consciousness raising groups.

In 1995, several things changed: 1) As police harassment became worse than ever, transgender people started to become activists in growing numbers and demanding their place in the movement. Their courage and strength impressed many who were indifferent or prejudiced towards them; 2) There was a split in the lesbian community; while some became more "separatists" and practically broke ties with the rest of the movement, others decided to create bridges towards gay men and transgender people. The timing was right. A few gay men had started to question their own machismo and were ready for a change. Lesbians stopped being just a token presence in the movement; 3) Young lesbians and gays joined the movement. They created their own group, became highly visible and helped their elders by questioning, asking long forgotten questions and reclaiming the critical, uncompromising spirit of the 70s FLH.

All those changes produced actions in 1996: a national gathering of lesbians, gays and transgender people; the most highly attended ever Pride Parade (1,500) in Buenos Aires; the emergence of several LGT groups in other parts of the country, some of them very strong and well organized; anti-discriminatory clauses explicitly mentioning sexual orientation in Buenos Aires and Rosario (the second largest city in the country); and an ongoing presence in the media. It was also in 1996 when the lost tribe, the bisexuals, joined in. It is quite exaggerated to speak of a tribe yet: the number of bisexual activists in Buenos Aires currently amounts to ... one (myself). But let's be optimistic: the GLT community has been delighted to add "B" to everything. No big wars had to be fought around the issue and such favorable conditions allow us to believe the number of bisexual activists will surely increase with time.

In my humble opinion, the positive aspects of the LGTB movement in Argentina right now are the following:

* The willingness of all sectors to listen to each other, to educate themselves and question their prejudices. This has benefited transgender and bisexual people a lot, making it easier for us to be heard, seen and respected.

* The presence of the young, as mentioned above.

* The courage and dedication of about two dozen individuals, who are all volunteers (paid activism is a nonexistent phenomena in Argentina), who devote huge amounts of time and work in order to help their communities feel prouder of themselves and resist heterosexism and violence in a more effective way.

* A society where a majority of people respect the right of individuals to their free choice of sexual orientation, and see it as an undeniable human right. Even though there is still a lot of anti-homo/bi/transphobia education to be done, the climate is favorable. Except for religious zealots, very few people would dare to say right now that a lesbian/gay/bisexual person is sick. Whenever something like that happens, many voices disagree and interestingly, those voices belong to non-queers (human rights organizations, medical & psychological experts, journalists, etc.)

And the negative aspects include the following:

* Activists are very few. We are so dedicated, so noisy, so stubborn that we look like thousands, but we are not. Most GLTB people still think their private lives are nobody else's business and there is no reason to be so flamboyant, so disturbing to mainstream society. We have not been able to successfully challenge those assumptions up until now.

* In-fighting, "movie star" susceptibility and mutual suspicion among individuals and groups still take a lot of energy out of the actual work, and impede growth.

* Being so few and the task so huge, activists have very little time to reflect on their actions. We owe ourselves and our community deeper analysis and debates of each group's political motivations and viewpoints.

* In a broader sense, right-wing sectors are becoming more violent in Argentina (again). The police are killing and threatening young people, transgender, journalists, union workers, while the repression of demonstrations and strikes is becoming increasingly and overtly ruthless.

We are few (and bisexuals fewer than anybody else), but we keep on dancing and I'm sure we will learn how to attract others to our dance.

Organizing your first bi conference:

some tips for success

by Adam Wills

Is your bi group organizing a regional bi conference for the first time? Intimidated by the prospect of budgeting, negotiating a contract, organizing workshops, and finding housing for people? Has your group thought about publicity, publications, food, and damage claims?

Conferences can either be a frustrating or rewarding experience, depending on how well you cover the bases. If planned professionally and fiscally sound, a conference offers an excellent opportunity for your group to raise operating funds while strengthening ties within the bi community.

Looking at Budgets Alan Hamilton's Retreat and Conference Budgeting pamphlet, available through the Bisexual Resource Center, offers a great template to get your conference budget up and running. It covers the basics of how to coordinate space cost with the anticipated number of attendees while taking into account food costs and rentals.

Other costs to consider when budgeting include incidentals relating to your facility, publicity, and publications.

Facility incidentals that aren't always figured into a budget can include permits, decorating materials, audio/visual rentals, as well as extra tables and chairs. Does a workshop need a microphone? What about a tripod for a chart? Consider every aspect that might require a financial outlay and place it in an operating budget so that there aren't many last minute expenditures.

When it comes to publicity for the conference, most people think of posters, putting ads in bi publications and on the Internet. An often overlooked avenue is spreading the word at other conferences, conventions, and events that may draw bisexuals. If there's a National Leather Association conference in your area, chances are there will be a number of bisexuals in attendance. Spending $50-$100 for a table to distribute information and registration forms for your conference could bring in more people to your conference that weren't previously aware of its existence. If you're really good at negotiating, you could make an arrangement whereby the other conference could have a table at your conference if they waive your table fee.

Printing programs, registration forms, and posters at Kinko's and then mailing various materials to people can get costly. These numbers should always be a little higher than what you think you need. People may register at the last minute and others might need a replacement program after losing one. Try to scrimp in other areas if you need to cut your budget, not this one.

Conference location ins and outs Having trouble finding a meeting space? Go to the visitors and convention bureau in your area. They can send out a prospectus about your conference. This method can guarantee that any responses are coming from those businesses that would be open to a bi conference.

If you are considering a hotel for your conference site, ask for their convention packet. This will make your liaison/committee appear experienced. When meeting with representatives from a hotel or convention center, it's important to dress and act professionally. Leave the freedom rings, bi buttons, and your Ani DiFranco T-shirt at home. People will be more apt take you seriously if you're wearing something that's business oriented.

Hotels, conference centers, and other meeting facilities will usually have a standard contract that a sales representative will bring out when you first talk about renting space. Don't sign it. Groups should negotiate for a contract that is better tailored to their own needs, and always ask for more than you really need because you never know what you can get. Figure that you will be negotiating for roughly six months. Also, all contracts should be in the name of an organization, not an individual. This protects an individual's assets if something goes wrong.

Always have corkage/forkage/cakeage waived from a contract. If you don't, the conference site can charge your group for serving food even if you provide the food yourself or hire an outside caterer. If it's a large conference, a hotel may request that you have food served as part of the contract. The hotel provides many services and wants every branch to make money. Instead of doing one of those expensive rubber chicken banquettes, consider raising the conference fee slightly and have the hotel cater the conference with food in a hospitality room. Free food is always a welcome sight and the hotel will be happy as well.

Try to find a weekend when hotels usually aren't busy. A hotel wants to maximize their earning potential by renting to groups that will utilize all their services: rooms, meeting spaces, bars, and restaurants. If you can guarantee that a few hundred people will stay at the hotel while they attend the conference, try to negotiate use of their conference and banquet rooms for free or at a reduced cost.

Keep detailed records of everything that relates to the event. It's crucial to have minutes to prove that the liaison or committee was authorized to plan the event on behalf of the organization. If a convention center still wants you to pay the full amount after the elevators didn't work, even though the contract stipulates that they would be running properly throughout the weekend, you may have to take the case to court. If you can't prove that your liaison had authority to make decisions for your group, the case could be thrown out of court.

Also, a conference should not be held responsible for damage. It's the responsibility of the hotel or conference center to look after its own premises. That's why they have insurance. Be sure to take a tour of all public rooms prior to the start of the conference and after it's over. It helps to videotape the rooms during the tours in case the hotel or conference center wants to sue your group for damages.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Miscellaneous helpful hints Try to keep from getting kicked out of conference sites. Sales representatives in this industry leap from job to job once a year on the average, so if you've burned your bridge in one location it will probably come back to haunt you eventually.

Let your sales representative know if you plan to have adult oriented material, like dildos, present during the conference. That way you can avoid running the risk of giving the manager a heart attack if they walk into the room during a safer sex workshop. If you will have any of these items, you might want to consider having a "childless conference" or have "childless areas" and let the sales representative know this.

Try to put together a dealer room full of spaces for bi owned businesses, feminist and progressive bookstores, local massage therapists, adult toy stores, political groups, and other area conferences. This is a great way of generating revenue; since the stores' sales figures depend on a successful turnout, it is to their advantage to help you advertise the conference.

If you have a dealer room and panel discussions/workshops, it's good to have a separate hospitality room with food and drinks for these people so that they can get away from the conference for a while and relax.

Tipping housekeepers, phone operators, and other staff people who worked at the conference location will help you to secure a site next year, especially if some conference attendees were rowdy and obnoxious. Bad feedback from the staff to the management will ensure that the welcome mat is pulled in when you come around to knock on their door again.

Closets

Even the most honest of us are rarely totally candid with everyone we meet. Sometimes we just acknowledge that certain personal things about us is nobody's business but our own. Not everybody needs to know about those contagious warts in hard-to-get-to places, or that we wear disposable diapers, or any number of personal secrets that we share only with those we are intimate with.

This discretion also applies to one's deepest fantasies, as well as what or whom turns us on. Homosexuals have a history of keeping quiet about their desires, of hiding in a closet, because of the past legal and social consequences against their sexual orientation. But, some people feel that they are too open to hide the fact that they love someone of the same gender, so they refuse to hide in a closet.

This new openness over the past couple of generations has had an exponential benefit to gay acceptance. While the bigoted fanatics scream and holler about moral corruption, more and more respected members of the community, by coming out, show that these self-righteous are full of .it.

Unlike Ellen Degeneres, whose coming out was seen, and is now known, by everyone on this planet, most of us have a closet with doors leading into many different rooms. I've been coming out in the local press for years in Gainesville and Miami, yet not all my coworkers have known that I have had homosexual relationships.

Since 1980 I have been married to a woman, and to my coworkers and acquaintances I pass for a married heterosexual. Most of my friends know about Jim my first partner, and that I am quite thoroughly bisexual, but only a few of my coworkers are privilege to that information.

Ironically, the ones most likely to learn of my bisexuality are those who project a liberalism that I know will be supportive and those whose homophobic ignorance compels me to set them straight about their stereotype of "sissies." But for the most part, I edit my history at work, alluding to events in my time with Jim as "we," and people seldom ask who was with me. On occasion I slip in a reference to Jim and me, but since people know I'm heterosexual, they assume that we were just friends.

Being bi, my closet doors don't open only into the heterosexual world. In my volunteer work and activism here in Miami, I often find myself surrounded by gay men. Our conversations reveal our common ground, and they know that I find men attractive and that I've been intimate with men. We're often tactile, and I know when I'm being cruised and at my age find it quite complimentary. I rather enjoy hanging with the guys, but I've noticed that here, too, I edit my conversation, saying such things as "I don't have the car that day," instead of saying "my wife has the car that day."

In both cases I suppose it's expedience more than fear of revealing my sexuality. If either my straight coworkers or my gay friends find out that I'm not what they assumed me to be, it just makes for complicated explanations. With the straights we're talking people who want to know "which one was the wife." With the gay men there's the possibility that I will be shunned, will lose that intimacy that gay men have when they are among friends.

I suppose I should make more of an effort. I have tried explaining to coworkers that two men in a relationship don't require either to be the "wife." That "sissy" does not describe the range of affect of homosexual men. Some people have a hard time getting it though.

(Continued on page 18)

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BiNet USA Annual Meeting - Report Back

"BiNet USA completed its 1997 annual meeting and it was wonderful"

Thursday morning:
Regional Organizer and National Coordinator meeting: Where we made delegate decision including bylaws changes and agreed that RO's and NC's would each create an action plan for the coming year to be shared with the rest of the RO's and NC's.

Youth Institute: Where they concentrated on Youth issues in the Bi movement, trained leaders in basic Community Organizing skills, and developed proposals for the larger meeting.

Thursday Evening reception: Low key evening at Kris Roehling's house. Wonderful food prepared by Lee Wilson, a member of the BiWays Orlando and a recent graduate of a culinary institute. People talked, laughed and then went out dancing.

Friday business meeting: A transformational experience for BiNet USA. Led mostly by Deb Kolodny and assisted by Stephanie Berger, BiNet Delegates and members envisioned the future and BiNet's place in it. We then broke down into small groups to generate goals and action plans. Bi the end of the day, there were seven working groups with concrete plans for the next year in the areas of Policy, Youth, Membership, Fundraising, Media, Events, Education and Multicultural issues. Several of the groups presented proposals that were approved by consensus on Sunday's business day.

Friday Night Coffee House: The First Unitarian Church of Orlando was jammin' as local musicians the Steel Rails Blues Band (Ben Lawrence, Les Canney, Alex Moore and Curtis Michelson) and BiNet poets including Lani Ka'ahumanu, Luigi Ferrer and Kim Ward entertained the happy crowd of people. There was even a blues conga line moving through the hall. Of course bright yellow and red T-shirts for the first annual Bisexual and Transgender Day at Disney were on sale.

Saturday:
The first annual Bisexual and Transgender Day. Activists and individuals met at the Harley and met at the park in their bright shirts just for the day. Participants report that the day was fun and festive. Some of the participants participated in a special visiBIlity project by handing out small label sized stickers saying "100% Bisexual" and "Queer but not narrow" Over 200 stickers were given out that day.

Some folks opted for sun and surf. There was even a sighting of a sticker on a toll booth on the way to the beach.

Wayne Bryant's book signing was a big success. People came from all around to get the famous Wayne Bryant to sign their newly purchased book from Out and About Books. This local vendor has shown a great deal of growth and movement in the last few years. This book signing was a crowning moment in the relationship with the Bi community.

Saturday night:
Some of us rested by the pool. Some of us went dancing at local clubs which was easy to do since the meeting was located downtown near many of the local night spots.

Sunday:
The meeting concluded with a report from the regional organizers and a report back from the small groups. The media group, led by Michael Szyzmanski did a hilarious skit telling the group about the Bisexual Emergency Resource Guide Emergency Resources, otherwise known as the BERGER. In the afternoon, in a mere three hours the gathering came to consensus on ALL the items brought before it. All but one of those was unanimous consensus. As far as anyone can tell, this is a first in the history of BiNet USA. This is a monumental feat and a sign of a major transformation for BiNet USA.

Proposals and Actions Taken at the 1997 BiNet USA Annual Meeting

Referendum on Policy Positions of BiNet USA: The Policy Working Group proposed the creation of a referendum for the purpose of surveying membership on their options concerning policy positions of BiNet USA. The content of the Referendum will be generated by the Delegate Body. The Referendum will be distributed by the Policy Working Group through the next *BiNet News*. BiNet's positions will then be based on a 2/3 response to this Referendum utilizing the vote by mail Robert's Rules of Order.

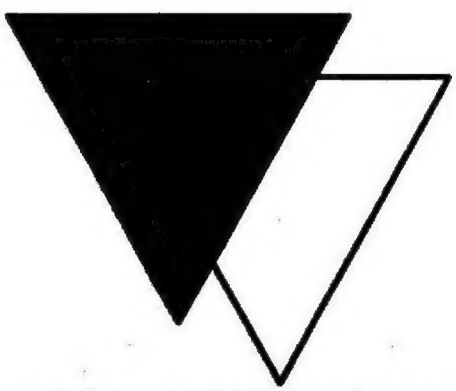
Proposal passed with unanimous consensus.

Investing funds in a Regional Organizer Tool Kit and Bisexual Organization Organizer's Manual: The membership working group proposed that BiNet USA invest funds for the creation of a regional organizer tool kit and a BiNet Organization Organizer's Manual (BOOM).

Friendly amendment was accepted to add the phrase "not to exceed $1,000"

The proposal as amended reads:

(Continued on page 14)



GAYS AND LESBIANS BANNED FROM ENROLLING IN THAILAND'S TEACHER TRAINING SCHOOLS

On December 26, 1996, in a report in the Bangkok Post, the Rajabat Institute Council, the collective governing body of all of Thailand's teachers colleges, declared that it would bar homosexuals from enrolling in any of its colleges nationwide. The announcement brought strong criticism from human rights groups and many others, who are urging the repeal of this discriminatory policy.

On January 25th, Suraporn Danaitangtrakul, a Deputy Education Minister, proposed that the Institute set a new criteria to bar people with "improper personalities," but not certain groups such as homosexuals. Anjaree, a lesbian group in Thailand, supported Mr. Saraporn's ideas but said the term "improper personalities" needs to be more clearly defined. Furthermore, members of Anjaree are working with other human and civil rights groups to request that the ban be dropped and that an anti-discrimination clause be added to the charter of the colleges. They are currently planning a conference to discuss opposition to the ban.

In a recent positive development, the Commission on Justice and Human Rights of the Thai Parliament has discussed the matter and decided that the ban goes against human rights principles. This occurred after hearing testimonies from psychiatrists confirming that homosexuals were not sick or abnormal. Members of Anjaree were also asked to present lesbian and gay arguments against the ban.

Youth Sues Over School Abuse

A 14-year-old will today take legal action in Sydney against his former school for alleged homosexual villification.

Christopher Tsakalos yesterday said he had been the victim of an intolerable regimen of verbal and physical abuse by students at Penrith's Cranebrook High School.

He said he had been bashed by gangs of up to 20 students, had had scissors held at his throat and the family house had also been spray-painted with homophobic graffiti. Ms. Vicky Tsakalos said her son had endured three-and-a-half years of "horrific trauma" and had attempted suicide three times.

Christopher left Cranebrook High School three weeks ago and has been studying by correspondence.

Lawyers are preparing to serve a writ today on the New South Wales Department of School Education, alleging it breached its duty of care.

A separate legal action will seek compensation from 50 students.

An assistant director-general of the NSW [New South Wales] department of School Education, Mr. George Green, yesterday said senior officers fromt he department had met Christopher and his mother to discuss his educational future.

The legal action would have no effect on the department's support.

Project Y.E.S. Gives Gay Youth Support During Adolescence

The passage of time never seems to be without great ironies. Twenty years ago Anita Bryant lead a campaign against gay rights in Miami by rallying people to "Save Our Children" from gays and lesbian teachers in public schools. Today, it is the gay community which has approach the schools system, offering to help save everyone's children from the fear, isolation and bigotry which confronts gay and lesbian youths.

To its credit, the Metro Dade Public Schools system has responded favorably to addressing the needs of adolescent trying to understand their sexual orientation. Both straight and gay adolescent often must confront their emerging sexual identity without strong, open-minded and informed guidance of parents, teachers and counselors. For gay and lesbian teens, the resulting problems are particularly acute.

National figures reveal that 80% of gay and lesbian teens report server problems of isolation, 50% are rejected initially by their parents and 28% drop out of school. A staggering 50% of gay and lesbian youth have experienced violence directly related to their sexual orientation and 30% percent of all teens who commit suicide are gay or lesbian. According to educators n Dade County, the same figure probably hold true for local gay and lesbian youth.

Helping counselors in Dade County schools to better understand the needs of gay and lesbian youth, is an Educational Specialist Liaison hired by Project Y.E.S. (for Youth Empowerment & Support). Founded in 1995, Project Y.E.S. works to create support systems and provide information which can have a positive impact on the lives of gay and lesbian youth, as well as speak up for their needs before community educators and government officials.

"Questions of gender and sexual identity have not been covered in many counselor education programs," says Dr. Carolyn Garwood, the project Y.E.S. liaison to the schools system. "Many counselor need help getting off the ground on this issue so that they can be more knowledge about the kids of stress the kids face. What I've been doing is helping them become familiar with the kinds of research being done in the area and what literature and materials on the subject are available."

Since last last year, Dr. Garwood has met with 40 Dade County Public School high school guidance chairs and conducted peer supervision groups for 18 counselors. According to Martha Fugate, Executive Director of Project Y.E.S., as invaluable as working with the counselors is, in some schools counselors most work with 60 or 70 kids and can only meet with them in small groups once a month. "That leaves many kids to just fall through the cracks," she says.

To try and pick up some of the slack, Project Y.E.S has established its own programs for gay and lesbian youth. Among those are a mentoring project to provide positive gay and lesbian role

models for teens, a summer intern project with Miami businesses and organizations and a speakers bureau to facilitate discussion in area schools and institutions about issues affecting gay and lesbian youth.

The Project Y.E.S. youth council, comprised of gay and lesbian adolescents from high school through college age, creates social activities to foster unity among gay and lesbian youth in Miami. Coming up on April 26 is the 1997 Gay and Lesbian prom at a the Shore Club hotel on Miami Beach.

"This means a lot to me," says Joseph Michaels, 18 and a member of the Project Y.E.S Youth Council. "When you are in High School all these other people have their prom, but you don't feel comfortable bringing your significant other if you are gay. Now we can have our own prom. It's one of the ways I can be proud of who I am. If you can't see anyone like yourself, you have no sense of history and belonging and are made to feel like an outcast. So it's very empowering to have a sense of community. It's like I found my clan."

For more information on Project Y.E.S. programs and events call (305) 663-7195.

Rio's Gays March For Tolerance And Right To Marry

Rio de Janeiro's gay and lesbian community came out in full force to stage its third annual Lesbian and Gay Pride march along Rio's world famous Copacabana beach.

Under cloudy skies, crowds lined the beachfront promenade to take in the colorful two-hour spectacle and watch the more than 1,000 gays and lesbians, including a lesbian couple in full wedding gear, wave their banners to the sound of Afro-Brazilian drums.

"This march is a matter of citizenship, greater tolerance and harmony," said Raimundo Pereira, one of the organizers of gay rights group Atoba. "Homosexuality is not a sickness or an abnormality, but just another sexual preference."

Transvestites with 10-inch platform shoes, exotic costumes and thick makeup charmed the crowds, but mock lesbian brides dressed in long white wedding gowns stole the show.

Accompanied by their sexy transvestite bridesmaids in neon green and orange wigs, short black dresses and fishnet stockings, the lesbian couple staged a mock wedding at the end of the march to express support for gay and lesbian marriages.

"We want to make people more sensitive to our needs and desires," said lesbian bride Sarandah Vilas Boas as tears rolled down her face after the ceremony. "We all have a right to be happy."

A law which would allow gays and lesbians to be married in civil ceremonies is currently under discussion in Brazil's lower house of Congress, but deputies have come under strong pressures from church leaders not to vote in favor of the legislation.

Deputy Fernando Gabeira, who took part in the march, said approval of the law would not only enable gays and lesbians to enjoy the same legal rights as heterosexual couples, but it would also help diminish prejudice and aggression against homosexuals.

He said one homosexual was killed every three days in Brazil, often in knife attacks.

Gay Teen Support Group In Dispute With IRS

Can the Internal Revenue Service force a support group for homosexual youth to prove that it does not encourage homosexual activity or attitudes among young people?

That's the question at the center of a dispute between the federal agency and a Greensboro organization.

The Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Support System applied to the IRS for tax-exempt status. The IRS wrote back in September 1996 with a letter the organization now claims is prejudiced and improper. The group has requested a new review of its application.

The IRS letter said the organization could not receive tax-exempt status unless it outlined, among other things, the procedures it had to make sure counselors did not encourage homosexual practices or attitudes among minors.

According to its own literature, GLASS is "a supportive community for self-identified lesbian, gay and bisexual youth and for those youth who still may be coming to terms with their sexual identities." It offers weekly support group meetings that seek to raise teenagers' self-esteem and help them deal with anti-gay prejudice.

IRS spokeswoman Jodi Patterson said the agency won't comment on individual cases because of privacy laws. But she said a gay or lesbian group would not automatically be barred from receiving tax-exempt status. "We don't pass judgment on points of view," she said.

American Psychological Association Resolution On "Reparative Therapy" *Delivers A Blow To Adherents*

WASHINGTON — The American Psychological Association passed a resolution that represents a serious setback to proponents of so-called "reparative" or "conversion" therapy.

These therapies amount to nothing more than psychological terrorism and are usually performed by practitioners who harbor intense bias against gay people. These practitioners usually are affiliated with extremist religious groups that promote the illusion that sexual orientation can be changed to further their political aims."

The resolution, which passed overwhelmingly at the APA convention in Chicago, asserts that there is no sound scientific evidence on the efficacy of these therapies. So-called "reparative therapy" seeks to convert gay people to heterosexuality, which many mental health professionals agree cannot be done. Some hve compared these techniques to efforts to make some left-handed people right-handed; they may learn to use their right hands but they still are innately left-handed.

BiNet USA
PO Box 7327
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National Coordinators and Regional Organizers - Spring /Summer 97

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1 Vacant Position

Regional Organizers

NORTHEAST REGION:

Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, & Vermont

Kim Ward

TRI-STATE REGION:

Connecticut, New Jersey, New York

Tom Limoncelli

Jennifer Hadlock

Penelope Williams - Youth Organizer

MID-ATLANTIC REGION:

District of Colombia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, & West Virginia

Margaret Rood

Spence Leonard - Youth Organizer

SOUTHEAST REGION:

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, & theVirgin Islands

Kate Clemm

Tim Turner - Youth Organizer

MIDWEST REGION:

Iowa, Kansas (all of Kansas City), Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Upper Michigan, & Wisconsin

Steven Butler

Myke Selha

Basia Rompa - Youth Organizer

CENTRAL REGION:

Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Lower Michigan, Missouri, & Ohio

No Regional Organizers

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION:

Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, & Texas

Deborah Dixon

David Lewis

SOUTHWEST REGION:

Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, & Utah

Stevi Belka - Youth Organizer

NORTHWEST REGION:

Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington, & Wyoming

Adam Wills

Brittany Wilson - Youth Organizer

PACIFIC COAST AND ISLANDS REGION:

California, Guam, Hawaii

Francine Turner

Roland Sintos Coloma

(Continued from page 9)

Supporters of reparative therapy demanded that the APA make a statement on these therapies because they have been under intensive debate within the profession and in the larger society.

This resolution reaffirms the fact that since there is nothing wrong with homosexuality, there is no reason that gay, lesbian or bisexual people should try to change their orientations. We stand with the APA in calling for an end to discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation.

The resolution strongly reaffirms that homosexuality is not a mental illness and that psychologists must not "participate in or condone discriminatory practices with sexual minority clients."

In addition, the APA resolution calls on psychologists to "respect the rights of individuals, including sexual minority clients, to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy." And it directs psychologists to obtain appropriate informed consent to therapy when working with sexual minority clients, including minors.

NOW Passes Trans Inclusion Resolution

After three years of ongoing debate and a final four days of intense dialog, the National Organization for Women (NOW) passed a transgender inclusion resolution at its National Conference. The measure's success owed a great deal to the personal support of NOW President Patricia Ireland — who had arranged for GenderPAC's Executive Director, Riki Anne Wilchins, to address NOW's National Board the preceding Thursday — as well as to intensive consensus-building effort by NOW Lesbian Rights Coordinator, Kimberlee Ward, and NOW-NJ State President, Bear Atwood.

"This was a landmark resolution whose time has clearly come ... It's not just the resolution, but the acknowledgment that the transgender community is today's cutting edge. Transgender people are now doing the pioneering work in exposing artificial constructs of gender and breaking down the stereotypes and barriers which divide us all," declared NOW Action Vice-President and long-time activist Rosemary Dempsey.

Agreed GenderPAC's Terri McCorcal, who had helped steer the resolution over three years, "In its own way, this was as historic a moment as NOW's affirmation of lesbian inclusion over 25 years ago. After all the debate, seven amendments, and scores of small compromises and dialogs, it was a truly emotional moment when nearly every hand in the Convention went up in support. Women who had worked on this for years were crying and hugging in the aisles."

The resolution had been originally introduced and unanimously passed at NOW-NJ's State Conference in 1994. The next year, a dozen activists from the Transexual Menace showed up at the NOW's 1995 National Conference in Columbus, OH and gathered hundreds of signatures on petitions. The resolution was introduced from the Conference floor, only to be tabled to the National Board, where it languished in spite of apparently overwhelming support. The breakthrough came when NOW-NJ's Bear Atwood was able to arrange an invitation for representatives from GenderPAC and allied groups to address NOW's state presidents at their annual State Coordinators Conference in San Francisco last January. As a result, a number of State Presidents came out in support of the measure. In addition, Ms. Ireland herself was present at the presentation, and an invitation to address the full National Board came shortly thereafter.

[Text of Resolution passed at NOW National Conference]

OPPRESSION OF TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE

WHEREAS, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has worked for the elimination of all forms of oppression in our society targeted at groups who are systematically mistreated; and

WHEREAS, the transgendered and transsexual communities confront oppression daily and are systematically mistreated because of artificial gender constructs in our society; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of understanding and information on issues affecting transgendered and transsexual people; and

WHEREAS, one of NOW's goals is to eliminate all sex stereotypes including so-called gender roles; and

WHEREAS, NOW affirms and honors the right of people to self-identify;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW and its sub-units encourage education and dialogue within NOW and other organizations on gender and sex stereotypes including those who are transgendered and transsexual people.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW reaffirm its commitment to end all sex and gender stereotypes.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that we acknowledge that gender is a patriarchal social construct used to oppress women.

Maine House Passes Civil Rights Bill; Measure Now Goes To Governor For Signature

Washington, DC — May 6, 1997 — The Maine House of Representatives gave gay rights advocates one more reason to celebrate when it passed a civil rights bill that would ban discrimination in employment, housing, credit and public accommodations Thursday night. The bill, which passed by a vote of 84-61 came one day after the Senate approved the measure by a 28-5 vote. Maine would become the 11th state to offer gays and lesbians civil rights protection. The New Hampshire legislature passed the measure earlier in the week.

With the expected signature of both governors, every state in New England would ban civil rights discrimination against gays. The nine other states that have passed similar legislation are Rhode Island (1995); Minnesota (1993); Vermont, New Jersey and California (1992); Connecticut and Hawaii (1991); Massachusetts (1989) and Wisconsin (1982).

Although Governor Angus King has pledged to sign the measure, opponents may mount a referendum campaign to block the law this year or to overturn it

(Continued from page 11)
in 1998.

"The people of Maine know what is right," said Kerry Lobel, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, (NGLTF). "They have always demonstrated a strong, independent way of thinking," she added. Lobel said she was "very encouraged" by the vote in Maine. "Momentum is on the rise for equal treatment for gay, lesbian and bisexual people in this nation," she went on, "and state capitals are at ground zero of this historic effort."

Gay and lesbian activists in the state have worked on this measure for the past 20 years. "This is a historic moment," noted Karen Garaghty of the Maine Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance. "We join the other five New England states in putting an end to discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens in our state," she added. "We hope the strong message New England is sending will ripple across the country."

Thirty-Two States Gather For Historic Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Movement Meeting; Federation Of State Groups Launched

Washington, DC — July 18, 1997 — An important chapter in the movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) equality was marked this past weekend by activists from statewide political groups from 32 states. At the meeting, activists officially launched the Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Political Organizations. The Federation's purpose is to bolster the efforts of these statewide groups through a network that will foster strategizing across state lines, building stronger state organizations and developing good working relationships between state and national groups.

The meeting was the result of an eight month collaboration between the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the Federation. It was the largest gathering ever of statewide groups. States represented were AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, GA, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MS, MO, MT, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OK, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WV.

The three day Federation meeting was held at the renowned Highlander Center outside Knoxville, Tennessee. For over fifty years, the Highlander Center has been a training center for labor, civil rights and other social justice movements. There, activists focused on adopting the organizational structure for the Federation and debating strategies on legislative issues. These issues included sodomy law repeal, passage of civil rights bills and family recognition strategies, as well as building strategies for effective multicultural and coalition organizing. The need for the Federation grew out of meetings of statewide activists during the past two years at NGLTF's annual Creating Change Conference. The Task Force coordinated the logistics of the Tennessee meeting, providing scholarships and staffing and assisting in the planning.

"We have known for many years that the real battles facing our communities would be fought in the State Houses across the country," said Paula Ettelbrick of the Empire State Pride Agenda, who is a founder and a co-chair of the Federation. "It is essential that we create an organizing structure that helps us to strategize as a national network of lesbians and gay men in order to support each other, share resources, and fight our common enemy of homophobia."

The Federation will consist of 13 Executive Committee members, selected from each region of the country, who will set forth the mission of the Federation. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force will serve as coordinator of the Federation for the next three years. NGLTF will coordinate and support the Federation's work through the dedication of staff and resources including the creation and dissemination of information and materials, regular conference calls, cyber resources and more.

"States are ground zero in the struggle for equality and justice, and it is essential that these state groups become better resourced and supported if we are to ensure our ultimate success as a movement," said NGLTF executive director Kerry Lobel.

"I am thrilled that the state lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender groups have united to form this Federation. The Federation will focus on strengthening state organizations so that we are better equipped for the upcoming civil rights battles we are facing state by state," said Dianne Hardy-Garcia of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas and co-chair of the Federation. "The formation of the Federation would not have been possible without the assistance of NGLTF. NGLTF has provided the resources needed to pull together the Federation. The Task Force continues to illustrate a real understanding that our movement must be a local, state and national movement if we are to succeed," added Hardy-Garcia.

The Federation is planning its next meeting for November's NGLTF Creating Change conference in San Diego, California. In addition to the meeting, there will be a series or workshops geared towards activists doing statewide work, especially on legislation. These workshops will be open to all.

Founder Of Right Wing Group Apologizes For Organization's Bigotry

WASHINGTON, DC — A co-founder of Focus on the Family, the largest right wing organization in the United States, today apologized to women, people of color, gay men and lesbians, and non-Christians for the misleading and hateful words that are now the hallmark of the organization he helped to create.

"I apologize to lesbian and gay Americans who are demeaned and dehumanized on a regular basis by the false, irresponsible, and inflammatory rhetoric of James Dobson's anti-gay radio and print materials," stated Gil Alexander-Moegerle, one of seven founders of Focus on the Family. He also urged fair-minded Americans to "report the truth about the threat [current Focus on the Family head] James Dobson and other religious extremists pose to the American tradition ... and the separation of church and state."

"Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people have long been a favorite target of Focus on the Family," said Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "Their politically charged rhetoric has become more forceful as James Dobson has increased the organization's reach and influence."

Alexander-Moegerle made his statement at the Gay and Lesbian PrideCenter in

Colorado Springs, CO in the offices of Ground Zero. While at Focus on the Family, Alexander-Moegerle was the executive producer of "Focus" radio and editor of *Focus* magazine. In addition to the apology, he called upon Dobson to step down from political activism. Of Dobson's political activities and continued misuse of his position, Alexander-Moegerle said "That is un-American" and "un-Christian."

"James Dobson's entrepreneurial spirit and personal political agenda has turned racism, sexism, and homophobia into a profitable business," said Lobel.

Focus on the Family, founded in 1977, has become the largest right wing organization in the United States. Their 30 state affiliates do grassroots political organizing on anti-choice, anti-gay, and anti-sex education issues. They have also become a Christian media empire, with magazines reaching over three million readers, a daily radio program reaching over 5 million people on 3,000 stations worldwide, television programs, and books. They have sponsored a number of organizing projects outside their organizational umbrella, including Promise Keepers. Their annual budget exceeds $110 million dollars and over 1,300 staff people. They are based in Colorado Springs, CO.

BiYouth E-Mail List Forms

A BiYouth Email(ing) List has formed. This list is is one of the projects of the Bisexual Youth Initiative. Please spread the word around! The instructions to subscribe are written below.

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How to Subscribe & Unsubscribe

The biyouth mailing list is a private mailing list for bisexual youth. The list is open to bisexual, bifriendly or questioning individuals of any gender ages 25 and under. The moderator has no way of knowing the real age of a subscriber and asks that if you are not in the appropriate age range you do not subscribe to the list, and, if you are already subscribed, to please unsubscribe immediately.

To subscribe: send an email message to <biyouth-request@lists.best.com> with the following text as the first line of the message:

(Continued on page 18)

BiNet Arizona: Organization on the move

Our group is increasing by at least one newcomer a month. I am not sure about your area, but we find that an exciting steady trend. I enjoy knowing that while we may be taking the slow but steady pace in the race, steady remains the key word.

The group has shown itself to represent many different avenues that people are looking for. Some want social interaction, some want support groups, and still others want political change and are willing to fight for it, some more vehemently than others.

That brings me to the focus of this article. For some time, I have been sensing frustration growing in many members as they search for a way to come out. It has been such a struggle for some people. I hear things like, "I get so angry," and "It pisses me off and scares me to think that my family might never speak to me again." One woman, after her first meeting, said that every time she heard or read the word bisexual she thought to herself, "I exist!"

I feel bad for everyone going through this struggle. This is non-directed anger. I can identify with non-directed anger. For many years I found it to be so much easier than actually dealing with difficult situations. It made for great rhetoric in protest marches.

As I matured, it dawned on me that I was wasting so much energy being pissed off and I wasn't accomplishing anything. What a great realization! But as we all know, most non-directed anger comes from fear, and I was still afraid, which in turn pissed me off because I want to live in a society where I don't need to be afraid of being persecuted because of my sexual orientation.

Therefore, I had to come out!!

One day, my husband asked me why I felt the need to shoulder the weight of the movement myself. "I don't walk up to people and say 'Hi, I'm Steve and I'm straight.'" I quickly reminded him that he is a white man in America and isn't likely to be beat up or fired from his job because of it. His reaction was simple, "No. Nevertheless, I don't think it is right for you to get beat up or fired because you're bi, or black or tall or big or a member of a particular political organization. And isn't that what it's all about?"

Aren't we trying to build a community of acceptance, not tell everybody what we do in our bedroom? It isn't anybody's business what we do in our bedroom. It shouldn't be, but that is what the fight is about. Building a community is more important than you coming out to everyone on the planet."

Now, let's think about this for a moment. I am essentially out, first off.

My mom knows, my husband knows and my daughter is regional rep for the Bi Youth Group. My coming out has virtually taken place for the most part, so this doesn't pertain to me directly, but he has a very good point. Let's look at this two ways. In our personal lives, this theory provides an opportunity to build a bridge with our friends and loved ones. Everyone has an area of personal liberties that are important to them; pick one of these and build your bridge. In other words, expose the cause, not yourself. Let your affiliation with a community building group lay the ground for future acceptance of your sexual orientation. You and your mother can agree now that hate crimes are as wrong when committed against bi or homosexuals as they are in any other case. Later she can accept that being bi or homosexual isn't so terrible after all.

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

In our "political" lives this is very important for BiNet USA, and every regional chapter. It is also important to other organizations in the common cause coalition that is growing quietly but rapidly in our society. Here we see the win-win situation brewing. By laying the groundwork within your private world you strengthen the work that others are doing on your and my behalf. As that battle is being won, acceptance is spreading. As acceptance takes hold, the grip that fear has on us loosens dramatically.

When that happens, all of us feel the effects gradually but surely, nonetheless.

Granted, this may be a time involved course of action. Look at it this way; a stronger chance of a definite win in the future versus the possibility of alienation and separation right now?

So ... should it piss you off that you have to even have a discussion like this? Yes! As I see it, you have three courses of action you can follow.

First you can keep that anger bottled up inside. The problem with that is you rob yourself of many positive interactions with other people. Stuffing anger generally tends to squelch one's capability to interact on a positive level. The second thing you could do is satisfy your own need to unload the secret and blurt it out over sweet potatoes at the next family dinner.

However, you run the risk of shocking your family so much that their reaction could do you and them more harm than good. The third course of action is the one that I am suggesting in this article. Direct your anger to the cause. Fight the fight for everyone and we will all win in the end.

Talyne Corlyn is co-chair of BiNet AZ and lives in Phoenix with her husband, daughter and future son-in-law. Her present goals are to raise public awareness about BiNet and other community building groups.

NGLTF BRINGS WAVES OF CHANGE TO SAN DIEGO

The shores of San Diego beckon thousands of activists from all over the nation as the 10th annual Creating Change Conference approaches. Creating Change, sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, is the national conference for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement. This year's event will be held November 12-16 and will feature over 120 workshops and small group networking sessions designed to enhance the confidence and skills of activists and organizers who work at the local and state level. The Conference is funded in part by a grant from the Gill Foundation.

Conference keynote speakers are Sheila James Kuehl, the first woman and the first lesbian to be named Speaker Pro Tem of the California Assembly; Martin Ornelas-Quintero, Executive Director of the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO); Roland Sintos Coloma, a former NGLTF Youth Institute graduate and a Filipino bisexual public school teacher; and Dorothy Allison, author of "Bastard Out of Carolina" and the forthcoming "Cavedweller." She will deliver the Second Annual Vito Russo Lecture on Art and Politics. A special guest at this year's conference is Carole Migden, Appropriations Chair of the California State Assembly. Pre-conference Institutes to be held include People of Color Organizing, Race Is the Issue, Youth Organizing, Media Skills and Leaders are Made, Not Born.

Workshop topics for 1997 include sodomy laws, marriage, fundraising, people of faith, gender identity, youth organizing, anti-violence, public speaking, workplace organizing, campus organizing and media advocacy. There will also be roundtable discussions with movement leaders on hot topics and trends.

"Creating Change has been the political hothouse of our movement for the past ten years," said Kerry Lobel, NGLTF executive director. "It has been the incubator of countless projects, campaigns, strategies and initiatives that help to bring our movement into the 21st century." For more information about Creating Change call 202-332-6483 ext. 3329.

(Continued from page 7)

The membership working group proposed that BiNet USA invest funds, not to exceed $1,000, for the creation of a Regional Organizer Tool Kit and a BiNet Organization Organizer's Manual (BOOM).

Proposal passed with unanimous consensus.

Prospective Budget for BiNet USA: The Sextet proposed that the finance committee work on a prospective budget that will be proposed to the participants of the 1998 BiNet Annual Meeting.

Proposal passed with unanimous consensus.

BiNet News Distribution: Barry Saiff proposed that *BiNet News* be made free, increasing its use as an organizing tool, and expanding distribution with particular focus on GLBT Community Centers. One camera-ready copy of BiNet News will be sent to each RO to be distributed or sold at their discretion and expense including putting a price on the front cover.

Seccnd proposal was passed with a modified consensus of 4 abstentions and 1 block.

(Editors Note: Upon verification with the IRS it was discovered that since the decision was to make the BiNet News free, that it would be illegal for it to be sold by the Regional Organizers or by Affiliate Organizations. Copies of the BiNet News will still be sent out but again can not be sold.

The Events Committee proposes that BiNet USA establish an Events Support Working Group to determine the feasibility of a regularly scheduled national conference and report back with a recommendation at the 1998 Annual BiNet Meeting.

Amended proposal passed unanimously

The meeting closed with a celebratory chant, lots of hugs and congratulations to everyone involved. The meeting ended promptly at 4:30 pm.

Bisexual Sightings

by Liam Kavanaugh

Send all of your Bisexual Sightings to
sheila@shiva.net or Liam Kavanaugh c/o BiPol, 584 Castro Street #422 SF, CA 94114
with "sightings"

The Bisexual Sightings from the last several months of 1996 and early 1997 are an assortment of gems. Thanks to Jim Frazin, Stephanie Berger, Gerard Palmieri, Loraine Hutchins, Jennifer Hadlock, Wayne Bryant, and Pat Ashbrook for forwarding these items.

Did you hear about Evelyn Mantilla, the Connecticut State Legislator who came out as bisexual at 1997 Hartford Pride celebration? She also proposed to her girlfriend during the same speech. That's two out bisexual state legislators I know about. The other one? Kate Brown in Oregon.

BIG MAMA CANDYE'S BLUES (song lyrics by Candye Kane)
"They call me Mama Candye,
because I'm big, wide and round
If you want 'em bi & large
I'll be coming through your town

They call me Sugar Candye,
because I'm sweet as cherry pie
And if you don't believe me,
just climb up here and take a ride

I tell you that bigger is better
And I know the reason why
I'm soft and full of lovin'
Guaranteed to satisfy

They call me Mama Candye
because I'm big, wide and round
If you want 'em bi & large
I'll be coming through your town"

By Candye Kane
"*a voluptuous vision with the voice of a honky-tonk angel hell-bent on seducing the devil.*" — *Austin Chronicle* review
Seen: On her first CD, *Home Cookin'*. Also, look for her latest release *Knockout*. Call Antone's Records 1-800-96-BLUES.

Yeah, well, this is an unabashed plug from a big bi admirer <blush>.

THE TEN MOST INTERESTING PEOPLE IN 1996:
Interview hosted by Barbara Walters
Barbara Walters: "Are you bisexual?"
Dennis Rodman: "No."
BW: "Is all this (cross dressing, make-up, etc.) about gender? What is it?"
DR: "Doesn't matter if I want to be gay. Doesn't matter if I want to be bisexual. You have to like me for who I am."
Seen: ABC, Barbara Walters Special

You go girl (and I don't mean Barbara).

"Bisexual Transmission Not Big Contributor to AIDS Epidemic in USA — Reuters (07/10/97) Researchers in San Francisco have concluded that bisexual transmission of HIV is not a major factor in the spread of the virus. The researchers report that according to the National AIDS Behavior Surveys and an HIV transmission model, there are an estimated 408 HIV infections each year transmitted by bisexual men to female partners in U.S. cities where the infection rate is high. "This number represents only about 1 percent of the number of HIV infections thought to occur annually in the USA," reported Dr. James B. Kahn of the University of California at San Francisco, and others, in the July issue of AIDS.

PETTY BIPHOBIC POLITICS
In the recent elections the Alice B. Toklas Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club in San Francisco decided to not put a pink triangle next to bisexual candidates' names on their official slate cards. This identifier only appeared next to the gay and lesbian candidate's names.
Seen: 11/96

Shame on you Alice! Loosen up, eat some brownies. What have you got to lose but votes?

FROM ANOTHER PLANET
by David Bank
"The story of how PlanetOut (a glbt Web site) went from venture-capital darling to Internet near-casualty in less than a year is a tale of marketing myth meeting business reality. The flash-point occurred over what came to be known as 'the bi and trans issue.' (There) was a concern he couldn't attract major advertisers to PlanetOut's site because it billed itself as 'a worldwide on-line community of gay, lesbian, bi and trans people.' Advertisers, Taylor told colleagues, would be scared off by anything broader than simply 'gay and lesbian.' Tom Reilly (one of the founders of Digital Queers and PlanetOut) was vehement that the company's original mission statement, including the reference to bisexuals and transgendered people, remain intact."
Seen: May 1997, *OUT* Magazine

For the rest of the inspiring and well-written story, pick up the magazine. Kisses to Tom, whatta guy. And hey guess who Tom called the Ken and Barbie of our Bi Movement ...

BI SISTERS MAKE THE NEWS! After three years of an out bi presence at North Carolina L/G/B/T Pride (with no recognition on the news despite the name), Melinda Brown and her sister made the evening news. They wrote up a sign that said "I love my bi sister!" with arrows to both sides, and carried it throughout the parade. Cameras descended upon them "like chickens on a June bug" to quote Melinda! They were the lead-in for the news.

BISEXUAL "MYTHS" - Ben Carlson's Letter to the Editor, 2/21/97
In her Valentine's Day column, Cintra Wilson printed a letter in which two formerly married men who failed to "control" their "homoerotic desires" advised bisexual men to reconsider any plans they may have to marry women ("Bi Guy is not in a unique situation," Style section, Feb. 14). After praising this advice, Wilson asserted that her personal experience indicates that most bisexual men "eventually go mainly homo" to the dismay of their wives and girl friends.

Carlson's letter reads:
"It's a shame that as a San Franciscan

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

Wilson could be so utterly surrounded with sources of credible information on human sexuality, yet still promote such hoary myths about bisexuality. One's sexual orientation is unrelated to one's self-control. Anyone in a committed relationship faces temptation. Bisexuals are no less equipped to handle it.

"While bisexual people are by definition attracted to members of both sexes, they are not necessarily equally attracted. Just because some bisexuals are more attracted to members of the same sex does not mean they are homos in disguise. Not everyone agrees that an individual's sexual orientation (as distinct from sexual behavior) can change over time. However, such change would be no more likely in bisexuals than in straights or gays."
Seen: 02/21/97 *San Francisco Examiner*

Having a gay man take the time to nail biphobia in a mainstream newspaper warms my heart and nurtures my sense of community spirit. FAR Out (Fag Allies Rock Out!)

"MOVING PICTURES AND SNAPSHOTS" Patricia Ireland
"I don't know how I could be more out. I've been very clear about how I live my life. In a world that goes two-by-two-by-two ever since Noah's ark, I've been very clear that there are two very important people in my life whom I love very much. My identity does not revolve around my sexuality. My identity is as a feminist. My identity on a good day is as an earthling. I have really great respect for people who do use labels. Outside the Republican National Convention, at the rally for gay rights, I began by saying, 'We're here, we're queer, get used to it.' I think there's not anything that's really hidden about who I am. And if I'm just perverse enough to say to people I'm not going to be pushed one way or another to adopt an identity or to define myself by somebody else's terms, I kind of enjoy that. I think it provokes people … I see my life, in terms of my sexuality, as a moving picture and I think labels are snapshots."
Patricia Ireland, National Organization for Women President, to Los Angeles' *Lesbian News*, February issue. Ireland has a male partner and a female partner. Seen: Rex Wockner's "Quote/Unquote column" 2/18/97

Like many fluid behaving folks Patricia won't be boxed in: even a bisexual label/identity can be constricting. And as a bi fat grrrrl I know there is no such thing as a "one size fits all" anything. I trust Patricia to speak out when the far Right heats up their campaign to scapegoat those who love and are committed to more than one person.

A GRAPHIC TALE OF BIPHOBIC REVISIONISM
The first version of this article appears here as it was taken from the Associated Press newswire and reprinted in the December 18, 1996, *Chicago Sun-Times*. The second are excerpts from the coverage in the *Chicago Tribune* on the same day.

BISEXUAL GETS CUSTODY OF HER 2 KIDS Associated Press
PEKIN, ILL. — A bisexual woman regained custody of her two children Tuesday in what an attorney said was the first time an Illinois appeals court had sided with such a parent in such a case. The 3rd District Illinois Appellate Court, based in Ottawa, unanimously found that the preteen children are not being harmed by living with their mother and her female lover.

"In this case, the evidence established that the children were thriving in their mother's care," Justice Peg Breslin wrote. The ruling should send a "powerful message" that parents should not fear losing custody just because they are gay or bisexual, said Patricia Logue, managing attorney with the gay-rights group Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. She helped represent the mother. The father, Stuart Schroeder of Morton, plans to appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court, said his attorney, William Anderson IV.

Rebecca Schroeder first won custody of her children in 1991 when the seven-year marriage ended. Two years later, she moved in with another woman and the father remarried. He then filed for custody. A Tazewell County judge granted custody to the father in January. His ruling focused on teasing that he believed the children might face. Other children may tease or shun the two, the appeals court acknowledged, but that might happen regardless of which parent they live with.

Illinois custody laws treat homosexual and heterosexual parents the same in custody matters, the appeals court said. And since the father presented "absolutely no evidence" that the children's moral well-being is suffering, the court said it must rule in the mother's favor.

Now here's the article as it appeared in the *The Chicago Sun-Times*, December 18, 1996.

APPEALS COURT LETS LESBIAN MOM KEEP CHILDREN
By Terry Wilson, Tribune Staff Writer
In the first ruling of its kind in Illinois, a state appeals court has upheld the custody rights of a woman in a lesbian relationship, attorneys said Tuesday. The ruling, issued Monday by the court in Ottawa, reversed a Tazewell County Circuit Court judge's ruling that gave custody of the children to their father because the children faced "the possibility of social condemnation" because of their mother's lesbian relationship, attorneys said.

"The reality of life for gay and lesbian parents is their ex-spouses are always threatening to play the gay card in court," said Patricia Logue, chief counsel for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund of Chicago, who argued the case.
Chicago Tribune, December 18, 1996
Seen: courtesy of PQP, the prospective queer parents web site.

Notice even the quote (or fabriquote) from Patricia Logue of Lambda has been changed. Hmmmm, I wonder if Terry Wilson, Tribune Staff Writer can be charged with tampering with the evidence. Perhaps we need to alert Chief Counsel Logue. CONGRATS and Happy Mother's Day REBECCA!

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN'
On Sunday, 3 August 1997, the Board of Directors of the National Lesbian and Gay

(Continued on page 17)



The Bisexual on the Screen: Two Recent Examples

by Fritz Klein

Many years ago, in trying to understand why the bisexual had such a bad rap in our society, I looked at how she/he were portrayed in literature and the movies. (See my book, *The Bisexual Option*) These fictionalized characters, interestingly enough, lead us to the truth of the way monosexuals see and feel about the bisexual.

Wayne Bryant's wonderful new book, *Bisexual Characters in Film: From Anais to Zee* and the upcoming book by Beth Roberts also show how bisexuals are portrayed negatively on the screen. They are seen as insane, sex crazed killers, and of course, not to be trusted. In other words: villains.

This past month I saw two films without knowing the storylines. The first was the film, *The Daytrippers* from director Greg Mattola. It is a low budget picture (under one million dollars) and is an exceptional and funny look at a quintessential dysfunctional suburban family.

Eliza finds a possible love letter to her husband, Louis. The whole family (mother, father, sister, and her boyfriend) gets in the car and head into Manhattan to look for Louis to confront him about the letter. The film works on many levels and is a bright and insightful look into family dynamics with a meddling mother, passive father, rebellious younger sister and her befuddled intellectually pompous boyfriend. Each character stands out, each with her or his strengths and weaknesses, except the husband, Louis, whom they are trying to find. He is a blank cipher. It turns out that he is not having an affair with another woman but rather with a man. The shocker is all the more devastating to everyone concerned because of the implied treachery of having a bisexual extramarital affair. He is definitely made out to be the villain. No excuses for him and no sympathy from us.

Once again, we see how the bisexual is viewed negatively in our culture — as a person who hurts others, a person who doesn't know what he wants, is mixed up and definitely untrustworthy. In other words, we see the the straight and gay and lesbian communities' stereotyped image of bisexuals.

Now for the good news! *Chasing Amy*.

As the storyline develops, it becomes obvious that we are once again dealing with a bisexual character, this time a leading protagonist. The story addresses with falling in love. No matter what time of your life, or with whom, falling in love can be an emotional roller coaster.

Holden, a comic book artist, falls in love with Alyssa (well played by Joey Lauren Adams), another comic artist and lesbian. She is "on the edge of discovery". Not sure what or whom, she wants from life, she desperately looks for a soul mate and does not rule out any adventure or sexual experience. This includes sleeping with a man. Holden sees his sleeping arrangements and affair with Alyssa as a clear sign that she's chosen him over other girls. So when it turns out she had alread experimented with men as a teenager, he falls apart.

At the end, it is Alyssa, the bisexual, who definitely takes the high road of emotional maturity and self-knowledge. At this stage in her life, she desires him and only him — and feels no need for other people (male or female). The two main heterosexual men are seen as flawed and her lesbian friends as biphobic.

The bisexual in this film is the hero. No mean feat, considering her personal history and society's prejudice for a bisexual lifestyle — a lifestyle that normally is seen as non-monogamous but, as portrayed here by Alyssa, is able to become so much more in the right circumstance.

Go see this film. In fact, see *The Daytrippers* also, as both are fine films. Notice the bisexual prejudice and biphobia in one while enjoying the positive elements of a bisexual life in the other.

(Continued from page 16)

Law Association (NLGLA), meeting in San Francisco, voted unanimously to affirm Bisexual and Transgender incorporation in its by-laws.

The by-law work was necessary because of evolution of the English language. Just as the word "men" no longer is understood necessarily to mean "men and women", and just as the term "gay" was deemed to not necessarily include "lesbians", the term "sexual orientation" no longer is understood to include transgender "gender identification" concerns and behaviors. Further, NLGLA Board considered transgendered and bisexual persons to be integral parts of the diverse gay and lesbian community and has openly operated in that fashion since 1994. After the committee report and a long Board dialog, including guest speakers from ICTLEP and from the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), Melinda Whiteway and Shannon Minter, it was decided that this was not a changing of by-laws to initially include bisexuals and transgenders, but instead was a more complete definition of the original by-laws to incorporate both bisexuals and transgenders who have always been a part of the lesbian and gay community in all of its diversity. The method chosen was the Minnesota method of defining the lesbian and gay community to be diverse and to include, but not be limited to, lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people. The vote was unanimous.

PS During the committee report, it was noted that recently the ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Association) completely

(Continued on page 18)

(Kerry Lobel Interview continued from page 17)
redid its by-laws and fully incorporated bisexuals and transgender people within the new by-laws.

And Last But Certainly Not Least

I am honored to be serving on the Board of Directors for The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and was privileged to take part in the historical vote on the new Mission and Vision Statement at my first Board meeting in Washington, DC, September 12-14th. The unanimous vote was celebrated by all those present, and Executive Director, Kerry Lobel spoke eloquently to the momentous occasion. I was rendered speechless by the big lump in my throat and appreciated her words.

The Mission Statement: The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force works to eliminate prejudice, violence and injustice against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people at the local, state, and national level.

The Vision Statement: As part of a broader social justice movement for freedom, justice and equality, we are creating a world that respects and celebrates the diversity of human expression and identity, and where all people may fully participate in society.

These statements send a clear and strong message. NGLTF is working with bisexual and transgender people and organizations for freedom, justice and equality. If you have hesitated joining or sending NGLTF money, I encourage you to reconsider. NGLTF has not only recognized the work of bisexual and transgender activists and organizers, the leadership speaks out on our behalf without hesitation, whether we are present or not. I ask one thing of everyone reading this, please if you do join, and/or send money, please put my name on the check or membership form (NGLTF 2320 17th St. NW, Washington DC 20009-2702. I am responsible for fundraising and memberships count. If you have time, write a letter saying why you are sending money or joining. NGLTF is walking the walk, and some of their funders are not going to like it. Whatever we can do to support their inclusive vision and leadership the better. If you'd like to network with me re: the Board, etc. contact me: <aloha@slip.net>

5th International Bisexual Conference (IBC5)

"One World, Many Faces"

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

The 5th International Bisexual Conference (IBC5) will take place in Boston Massachusetts on April 3, 4, and 5, 1998. The IBC5 conference theme is "One World, Many Faces: Unity and Diversity in Bi Communities, Queer Communities, and the World."

We are currently seeking proposals for presentations, papers, panel discussions, performances, and workshops in the following subject tracks:

- Activism
- Youth/Student
- Media/Culture
- Gender
- Bisexual History
- Safer Sex/HIV
- Sexuality
- Non-Bi Partners/Families
- Film and Video
- Organizing / Activism
- Writers/Literature
- Relationships
- Research/Theory
- Spirituality
- Personal Growth
- Computer/Internet
- Performance
- Track X (other sessions)
- Our Bodies: Differing Ability, Health, Image
- Global/Regional/Racial/Cultural/Class Differences

The official language of the conference will be English; however, sessions in Spanish are encouraged and other languages will be considered. If you would like to present your session in a language other than English, please include that information in your proposal.

The deadline for proposals is February 1, 1998. For more information please write to:

IBC5 Call for Papers
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge MA 02140
USA

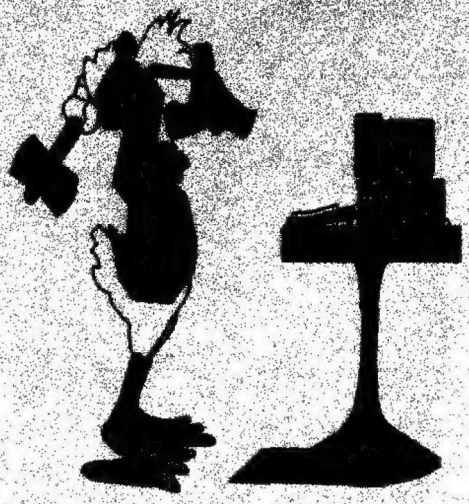
(Continued from page 13)
for digest version: subscribe <your email address>
for single message version: sub single <your email address>

To unsubscribe: send an email message to <biyouth-request@lists.best.com> the following text as the first line of the message:
unsubscribe <your email address>

To send a message to the list, just send a message to <biyouth@lists.best.com> and your message will be sent to all other list members.

(Continued from page 6)
With my gay male friends, it's just cumbersome to have to explain that while I am married to a woman and appear to be heterosexual, I really enjoy men intimately. I not only like men, I've made love to men. I enjoy the way they talk, the way they smell, the shape and feel of their body, the brush of beard against my cheek. When I am with a group of gay men, I am a gay man. And yet, ... I am married to a woman who I love dearly. What's to explain. We bisexuals are real.

Classifieds



Classified AD Information and Guidelines

These Classified Ads are published free to BiNet USA members, and are placed on an "available space" basis. Ads other than those in the Organizations section will be published in one (1) issue and then automatically deleted unless renewed by the advertiser. Ads may be placed in one of several categories: **National Resources, Personals, Prison Pen Pals, Calls for Submissions, For Sale**. If your Ad does not fit one of these categories, make a suggestion. All personal information will be held in confidence, with the exception of releasing mailing address or phone number as requested as part of the Ad text.

BiNet News reserves the right to edit or reject any Ad, and shall not be held responsible for any errors in publication. Ads which contain blatantly crude or sexist language will not be accepted.

BiNet USA and/or *BiNet News* is not responsible for claims made in any advertisement. BiNet USA and/or *BiNet News* is not responsible for individual actions or behavior in the placement or response to any Advertisement. So be smart when answering any advertisement.

National Resources

International Directory of Bisexual Groups now available!!!

Edited by Robyn Ochs and published by the Bisexual Resource Center, this issue has new listings and includes bisexual and lesbian/gay/bisexual groups in 18 countries and over 40 states. You can get your copy by sending $11.95 to BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140

Funding

The Bisexual Advisory Board of CA Institute of Contemporary Arts (C.I.C.A.) announces that grants ($200 to $1,500) are available for projects related to bisexuality, for example: publications, academic research, seed money for new Bi organizations, community outreach projects, etc.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and will be reviewed every 4 months. Send for application to: Bi Adv. Board, C.I.C.A., 4545 Park Boulevard, # 207, San Diego, CA 92116, USA

Personals

Bi Latina, 29, poet, artist, singer/songwriter interested in writing to Bi men and women to talk about art, blues and who we are. If you are sincere and witty please write: Elisa S. Gutie'rrez, 1153 W Magnolia Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92411

Prison Pen Pals

Incarcerated white male ISO a very special love, a caring person or persons who wish to get to know me. I'm Bi and am looking for the same, a couple or a single person who wants to be a couple. My age is 27, 6', 175lbs, Blk hair, Br. eyes. Soon to be released. Hays Glasscock #107193, Kentucky State Penitentiary, PO Box 128 6-A-10, Eddyville, KY 42038

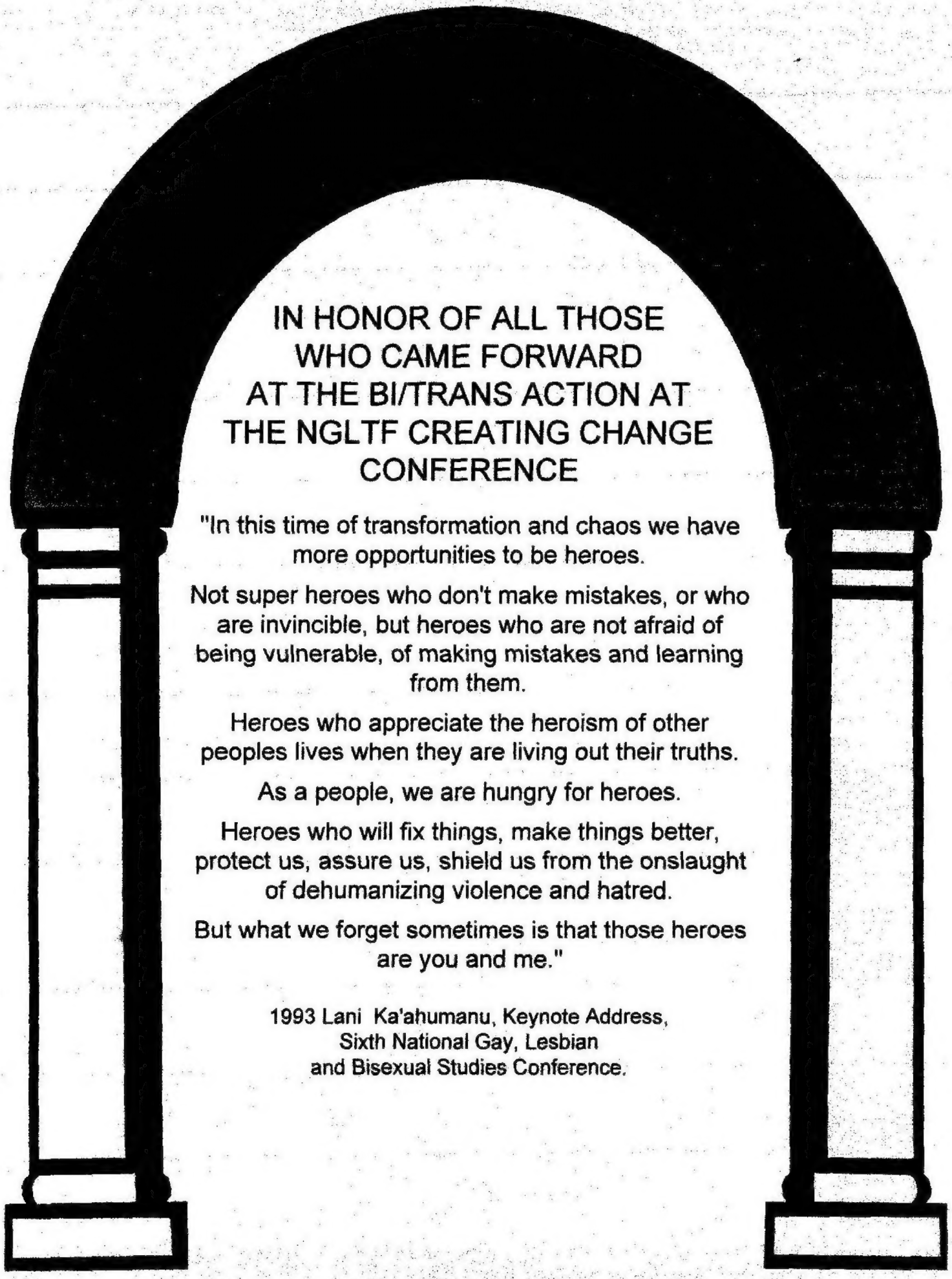
Submissions

MALE LUST!!: Submissions wanted for an anthology about male sexuality. We seek non-fiction essays which address political and theoretical issues as well as autobiography, poetry, visual art and erotic fiction which more directly connect readers with our personal and emotional lives as men (a small number of essays by women will also be included).

We seek writings on male lust in relation to a variety of other topics, including: masculinity, race/class/ethnicity, sexual orientation, transgender experiences, aging, disability, pornography and the sex industry, S/M and other unconventional sexuality's, feminism, HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse/rape, and spirituality/addiction. We are interested in any and all topics that address the political, social and emotional realities of men's sexual desire and its expression.

Submissions may be emailed to kerwyna@igc.apc.org, sent on a 3.5" MAC or PC disk (MS Word unformatted), or typed double-spaced. Please do not send originals if sending artwork. Be sure to include a cover sheet with your name, address, phone#, and a brief (30 word) biography. Also please include a SASE if email is unavailable. Send submissions to the above email or to PO Box 424195, SF, CA 94142-4195. For more information, call Kerwin at (415) 863-8197. Submission deadline: March 31st, 1997.

Fishnet, the on-line World Wide Web magazine of *Blowfish* (the mail-order erotica catalog), is looking for writing about sex. We are looking for non-fiction, fiction, and — if it's really, really good — poetry. Content can be straight, lesbian, gay, bi, trans, poly, SM, vanilla, whatever. Any topic having to do with sex, sexuality, gender, body image, and related issues will be considered. Fishnet is polymorphously perverse; as long as it's legal, we aren't picky. We're primarily looking for pieces of 750-1500 words. Payment ranges between $25 and $75 per piece, depending on length and various other considerations. You get an additional 50% if you take your pay in Blowfish products rather than cash. Submissions may be sent to Fishnet, c/o Blowfish, 2261 Market St. #284, San Francisco, CA 94114. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope, and indicate whether you want the copy returned. Submissions can also be faxed to 415/282-1618, or e-mailed to greta@blowfish.com.



IN HONOR OF ALL THOSE WHO CAME FORWARD AT THE BI/TRANS ACTION AT THE NGLTF CREATING CHANGE CONFERENCE

"In this time of transformation and chaos we have more opportunities to be heroes.

Not super heroes who don't make mistakes, or who are invincible, but heroes who are not afraid of being vulnerable, of making mistakes and learning from them.

Heroes who appreciate the heroism of other peoples lives when they are living out their truths.

As a people, we are hungry for heroes.

Heroes who will fix things, make things better, protect us, assure us, shield us from the onslaught of dehumanizing violence and hatred.

But what we forget sometimes is that those heroes are you and me."

1993 Lani Ka'ahumanu, Keynote Address,
Sixth National Gay, Lesbian
and Bisexual Studies Conference.

"BiNet News." BiNet News., spring-summer 1997, p. [1]. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/HEBQNM644022863/AHSI?u=ubcolumbia&sid=bookmark-AHSI. Accessed 30 Dec. 2024.